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Programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011

Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/65/L.36

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

I. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 6 and 7 of draft resolution A/65/L.36, the General Assembly would:

(a) Request the Secretary-General to organize a series of activities annually to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, including a commemorative session of the General Assembly at United Nations Headquarters and, as appropriate, activities through the network of United Nations information centres;

(b) Request the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the countries concerned and with relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, to continue to take appropriate steps to enhance world public awareness of the commemorative activities and the permanent memorial initiative, and to facilitate efforts to erect the permanent memorial at United Nations Headquarters.

2. With regard to the provisions contained in operative paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/65/L.36 relating to efforts to erect the permanent memorial at Headquarters, it is the understanding of the Secretary-General on the basis of operative paragraphs 3 and 4 of the draft resolution, that the request would be undertaken only when sufficient extrabudgetary funding was received. The long-

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term running costs associated with the maintenance of the memorial would also be borne by voluntary contributions.

II. Relationship of the draft resolution to the strategic framework and the programme budget for 2010-2011

3. The activities referred to under operative paragraphs 6 and 7, whereby the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General and the Department of Public Information, respectively, to organize a series of activities annually to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance, including a commemorative session of the General Assembly at the United Nations Headquarters and, as appropriate, activities through the network of United Nations information centres, and in cooperation with the countries concerned and with relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, to continue to take appropriate steps to enhance world public awareness of the commemorative activities and the permanent memorial initiative, relate to subprogramme 3, Outreach and knowledge-sharing services, of programme 23, Public Information, of the strategic framework for the period 2010-2011 (A/63/6/Rev.1) and are under section 27, Public information, of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

III. Activities by which the requests would be implemented

4. Should the draft resolution be adopted, various activities, as described below, would need to be undertaken.

5. The Department of Public Information would organize a series of activities annually to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance, including a commemorative session of the General Assembly at Headquarters and, as appropriate, activities through its network of United Nations information centres. The activities would include:

(a) An exhibit on a theme related to the International Day of Remembrance;

(b) Film screenings on themes related to the International Day, which would be held at Headquarters and, possibly, at other United Nations locations, for staff, the diplomatic community and invited guests;

(c) A student videoconference, which would be held at Headquarters, to connect high-school students and teachers, from around the world;

(d) A cultural event and/or concert celebrating themes relating to the International Day;

(e) A panel discussion on a theme related to the International Day, which would be organized as part of the non-governmental organization briefings series, with the participation of speakers who are experts in their field;

(f) Educational outreach resources, including posters, postcards, banners, T-shirts and promotional videos and DVDs.

IV. Modification to the programme of work for 2010-2011

6. In order to reflect the provisions of the draft resolution, the following modification would need to be made to the narrative of section 27, Public information, of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/64/6 (Sect.27)):

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In paragraph 27.43 (a) (vi) c, under "Special events", add the following to existing paragraph c:

"organization of a series of events and the promotion of observances of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (2)".

V. Estimated resource requirements

7. For the biennium 2010-2011, the Department would require the following resources:

(a) General temporary assistance of one Professional staff member and one General Service staff member for five months to coordinate the planning and organization of the annual week-long observance, including the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on the observance ($85,000);

(b) Contractual services relating to hosting a cultural evening and concert, including to cover stage, security and production costs, as well as fees for performers and artists ($100,000), an exhibit on a theme related to the International Day of Remembrance ($20,000), technical requirements and the travel of external experts as moderators for student videoconference, organization of a teachers' conference at Headquarters to promote development of a curriculum on the transatlantic slave trade ($18,000) and film screenings ($1,500);

(c) Travel expenses, including roundtrip tickets and related expenses, for two days of panel discussions for non-governmental organizations, where the panellists would possibly be from Africa and the Caribbean ($12,000);

(d) Education outreach resources relating to posters, postcards, banners and T-shirts as well as promotional videos and DVDs ($15,000).

8. The implementation of these activities would involve additional public information resources in the total amount of $251,500 under section 27, Public information, of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

9. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions related to the remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, the Department of Public Information undertakes certain activities incorporating the theme, such as through weekly non-governmental organization briefings, United Nations student conferences and existing exhibits, as detailed in the reports of the Secretary-General on the programme of educational outreach on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery (A/63/213, A/64/299 and A/65/390). The Department also promotes these activities through its website and printed materials. However, under the provisions of operative paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/65/L.36, the scale and reach of these

activities would need to be expanded to include a series of events, including travel of speakers and moderators and the organization of a cultural event and/or a teachers' conference for curriculum development. As such, the scope of the activities would require additional resources, including temporary assistance.

VI. Potential for absorption during the biennium 2010-2011 and estimated requirements for the biennium 2012-2013

10. There are no provisions under the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 that could be made available to support the series of activities planned to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance. At the current stage, it is not possible to identify activities within section 27, Public information, of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium to accommodate the additional requirements.

11. Owing to the recurrent nature of the commemorative events, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the ongoing biennial requirements would be estimated at $503,000 gross (i.e., $251,500 per annum).

VII. Contingency fund

12. It will be recalled that under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. In accordance with the decision contained in paragraph 21 of Assembly resolution 63/266, the contingency fund for the biennium 2010-2011 has been set at the level of $36,532,900. Under this procedure, if additional expenditure were proposed that exceeded the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities must be deferred to a later biennium.

VIII. Summary

13. **Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/65/L.36, additional requirements amounting to $251,500 would be required under section 27, Public Information ($239,400), and section 36, Staff assessment ($12,100), to be offset by the same amount under Income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011. This would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require appropriation for the biennium.**